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MINOR STUDIES FROM THE PSYCHOLOGICAL LABORATORY OF WELLESLEY COLLEGE.

Communicated by MARY WHITON CALKINS.

I.—THE “CONTINUED STORY.”

By MABEL W. LEAROYD,

With the assistance of MAUDE L. TAYLOR.

This paper briefly states the results of an attempt to discover something of the prevalence and nature of “continued stories”—imaginary and usually unwritten narratives, prolonged by their inventors, so that they go on through several weeks, months, or years. In such stories the same characters reappear in different situations and predicaments, growing often in years and in intellect. The stories themselves are cherished with a peculiar fondness, and always regarded by the authors as an especially sacred mental possession, to be shared only, if at all, with very sympathizing friends. These stories have been classified, by one of the most versatile of “continued-story-inventors,” according to six main types: (1) The fairy tale and (2) the tale of martyrdom—both characteristic of early childhood; (3) the romantic and (4) the adventurous story—both belonging to late childhood and to early youth; (5) the ideal type, confined to no particular period; and (6) the practical story—characteristic of maturer years.

This paper is based on the records of 114 children in New England schools; of 214 young women, students at Wellesley College, and at the College for Women of Brown University; and of 148 men, most of them students at Harvard and in Iowa College, but a few of them in business and several of them in middle life. The following table shows the number of those who have at some time possessed a continued story:

TABLE. PREVALENCE OF CONTINUED STORY.

Age of Subjects.	ANSWERS TO QUESTION, " HAVE YOU A CONTINUED STORY?"						
	WOMEN AND GIRLS.			MEN AND BOYS.			Sum Total.
	Yes.	No and Doubtful.	Total.	Yes.	No and Doubtful.	Total.	
Adults,	100 (46.7%)	114 (53.2%)	214	20 (13.5%)	128 (86.4%)	148	352
Children,	41 (68.3%)	21 (31.7%)	62	29 (55.7%)	23 (44.2%)	52	114

From this summary it appears that nearly two-thirds of the 114 children who answered the question have continued stories, but that the proportion of affirmative answers is slightly greater among the girls. The insignificance of this difference is noticeable, and seems to suggest that the greater difference between the records of the men and the women is perhaps a result of different training. The children were members of the intermediate grammar school grades, and averaged twelve years of age. (The nature of a continued story was carefully explained to them, and all the detailed questions were asked, though the answers were not recorded). Less than a third as many men as women have continued stories, but the stories of the men are as vivid, as pronounced, and as significant as any of those recorded. One young man, for instance, reports that in his seventeenth and eighteenth years he spent six hours a day in the invention of his stories, which he characterizes as "baneful bothers, wasting time, and destroying activity even to eating and rising."

From the 93 detailed affirmative records received from adults, the following conclusions may be reached: With very few exceptions, the stories begin in childhood, and several subjects date them in their fourth year. The experience, however, is not wholly a childish one, for only 34 (of the 87 subjects who replied to this question), that is, only one-third, have lost or dropped the stories. Even a man of seventy years still carries them on. They may begin, also, in adult years. The number of stories of a given subject varies from "one," through "several," to "innumerable," or "hundreds." The length varies from weeks to years: some stories have continued since early childhood, and two-thirds of the subjects (64) have had stories with a duration of years.

With almost all the authors, comparative solitude favors the growth of the story. Many subjects, therefore, mention the hour before falling asleep as peculiarly sacred to the

"continued story," and others speak of lonely walks, of monotonous or solitary occupations like "hoeing corn," or "driving the cows." One young man says: "The story was always thought of at night, when I took long walks, often well into the morning."

The starting point in all but 12 cases is an assignable experience or a book actually read. One young woman says: "For many years I used to get the characters, station in life, place of residence, and even the remotest particulars, by telling fortunes on daisies. Then using this as a basis, I would mentally continue the stories."

In only one-fifth (18) of the stories are the characters exclusively fictitious, while in about half (47) they are entirely from real life. In three-fourths of them the author plays a very prominent part. "The heroine of everything," one subject says of herself. Often this hero is an idealized self. Thus one subject writes: "I remember in one of my stories introducing myself just as I was, and also this idealized 'I.'" Two-thirds (64) of the stories are said to "embody an ideal."

Some of the tales are recognized as distinctly helpful; others are chiefly sources of amusement. Occasionally the stories are said to be really harmful. So one student writes: "I realized that it kept me awake too long and * * * sometimes made me absent-minded, so I deliberately made myself think about other and real things * * * and gradually my interest in my story faded away." Entirely opposed to this is the experience of some one who says, "I have kept it up in order to keep my mind on one subject before going to sleep, and so as not to run over and over the events of the day."

The stories sometimes gain a great vividness, and almost the force of an illusion. So one subject says, "The story was so real that often in my dreams I was not myself, but the story character, and surrounded by the other story people." Another writes, "If I have said or done something which I wish I had not, I can, by continuing this story, make it seem as if I had never said or done it."

Most of the characters show a certain development; they "grow as I grow," as one writer says. This seems to be the essential difference between the continued and the short story: the former is more intimately related to the life of its author. So one subject writes: "The long story is vitally connected with my nature." The accentuation of the emotional element in the continued stories suggests the same connection, and, on the other hand, the distinction is shown by the occasional recognition that the short stories have a greater literary value. One subject writes: "Short stories

have a greater variety of character and incident ;" another says, "If I ever hit upon a fairly good plot the story ceases to be continued." Evidently the longer story follows the growth of the author's plans and purposes ; embodies in concrete form his changing ideals. For this reason, one of the acutest of the observers who has answered the questions concerning her story pronounces the long story decidedly more helpful and more wholesome than the shorter ones.

It has already been suggested that the essence of the continued story, as of the more evanescent, lies in the opposing yet interacting tendencies of every individual toward self-assertion and toward imitation. The experience of the girl who says that the origin of the stories, so far as she can tell, was her "firm belief" in her "own powers," may supplement, not contradict, the testimony of the man who says that he likes "to copy a result," and that he thinks his stories "the result of a tendency toward imitation." Even the following experience, with all its self-assertion, obviously requires imitation :—

"I think the story was a continuous and progressive embodiment of my ambitions and ideals. In childhood it was popularity or skill in games, or fine possessions, in which I revelled, in imaginary conversations with other children, in which they always recognized me as superior to them, and in which I, too, had a comfortable sense of superiority. As I got older, I was more apt to picture myself as triumphant in wondrous feats of scholarship in gaining school honors. And finally I used to see myself as a teacher, and the imaginary conversations would be with the class or with the school officials. All the stories represented real ambitions which were always fulfilled, and the chief pleasure of the vision seems to have been unbounded conceit, for characters besides myself apparently existed chiefly to be witnesses of my success and to be a little envious of it."

The story which follows, illustrates admirably many of the most typical features of the "continued story :"—

"When a boy about ten years old, I read the lives of Alexander the Great and Napoleon. Then I soon began to construct these stories. I was always the hero and * * * became a great general at the head of a mighty army. I would describe my marshals and armaments, the plans of the battles and then the victorious march homeward. I always became emperor of France and conqueror of Europe, and then had a long reign filled with all kinds of interesting things. I always pictured the great funeral that followed my death and a people in mourning. I would describe in the minutest detail my children, their names, their exercises,

their studies, their marriage and the beginning of their careers. I described my home, the lakes, drives, and always my study. There was never any break. The story flowed right on, and if my attention was called away, I was always uneasy until I could begin again to weave it. I would always lie awake as long as I could, after going to bed, to work on it. I always brought my friends in and provided well for them.

"At the age of fourteen, I began to read the lives of men like Webster, Clay, Lincoln, etc. Then the story changed. My education was such as fitted me for an orator and statesman. I always became governor of my state, congressman, senator, and finally president. Every step and all my relations to friends were minutely described. I usually ended up by becoming president of a World's Congress of Peace. As soon as I had died I always started another story."

II.—SYNÆSTHESIA.¹

BY MARY WHITON CALKINS.

The study of the varying forms of persisting abnormal association, usually known as "colored-hearing" and "forms," but grouped together by Theodore Flournoy, under the convenient name *Synæsthesia*, has hardly, as yet, completed the stage of scientific observation. The physiologists, with their guesses of intertwined nerve fibres, and Mr. Myers, with his prompt application of the subliminal consciousness theory, are avowedly dealing with unverified hypotheses; on the other hand, the reports of particular cases are apt to overlook the ordinary forms of the phenomenon and to disregard the frequency of the experience. For the purpose, then, of a wide yet careful survey of these phenomena of consciousness, assuming no certainty of any important theoretical outcome, it has seemed worth while to continue the statistical study of synæsthesia begun two years ago at Wellesley College. The investigation has the advantage of reaching a large number of individuals of the same sex and of about the same age, but coming from different localities and homes. The artificiality of many statistical inquiries has been avoided so far as possible, by making the questions both concrete and simple. Some of the questions of the former study² are here not at all considered, either because of the practical unanimity of the earlier

¹A continuation of the Wellesley College Study of Colored-Hearing and of Forms.

²"A Statistical Study of Pseudo-chromesthesia and of Mental Forms." AMERICAN JOURNAL OF PSYCHOLOGY, Vol. V, 4.